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Subject: Microsoft settlement

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Please I beg of you..... If you let Microsoft get away like the current proposal suggests, We (the computer professionals) may never be able to dig ourselves out from the pit Microsoft has cast us all into.

Microsoft products by virtue of being a monopoly, have been designed without concern for security or reliability. I can prove that the design of Microsoft products leads to the spread of countless virii in the computer industry. They (Microsoft products) are the perfect products to use to send damaging virus from many groups like the terrorists from Afghanistan, Israel, Palestine, Egypt.... And do not imagine that these places have not already done damage.

And it is not only because Microsoft products are in such wide use, but the real problem is that the products have been very poorly designed. It seems Microsoft has enough money to do the job right, so the remaining reasons why the products are so poorly written is that there is currently no need to be "Best of breed". when you are the only option.

It will not be long till they (the terrorists) discover that they can inflict hundreds of billions of dollars in damage. All this because Microsoft has a virtual monopoly, and instead of actually writing well designed programs, they spend all the energy they have to simply maintain that monopoly.

Often I give speeches to information technology groups that state.... "Without Microsoft in the industry, we would be at least 10 years ahead of where we are today". But because of the constrictive designs and monopolizing practises of Microsoft, no possible competitive products have been able to get a start.

As just one example: IBM wrote a fine operating system called OS/2 in 1992. Only today some 9 years later is Windows XP beginning to catch up to the technical capability of OS/2. In fact it still has a long way to go to catch up to OS/2 in security and reliability. What happened? IBM could not get any hardware vendors to carry the software because Microsoft had tied up all manufacturers of computers to include with each and every computer, a copy of Windows. This in spite of the fact that many wanted to use OS/2 instead of Windows. What happened to anyone who decided to use OS/2 was they also paid and received a copy of Windows that they did not desire.

The only way to get the marketplace back in order is to separate the computer hardware from the operating system. When you go to a store to buy a computer, you should be able to buy any computer available without having to also purchase an operating system. That choice should be made at the time of purchase rather than included in the cost of the computer.

Please suggest that all operating systems should be available as separate products. The purchase of a computer should not also be the purchase of products from Microsoft.

It is much akin to buying a car, and with that car purchase, it also comes with a coupon for gasoline from the Microsoft gasoline company. We agree that the car uses gasoline, and we all buy gasoline, but what if we prefer to buy gasoline from Shell rather than prepay for gasoline from the Microsoft gasoline company? Should we not have the option of not prepaying for fuel from the Microsoft gas company?

Please at least bring this option up. It solves all the problems inflicted upon us by Microsoft and some of their abuses of the Sherman act. It also requires little supervision, and levels the playing field for others to play.

I suggest this (above) in addition to any penalty that might be given Microsoft because of the illegal activities regarding the Sherman act. It's just that without the above mentioned separation of operating system from the hardware, we will not see any competition in the operating system industry. And when I imagine where we (the users of computers) could be were it not for Microsoft, I am almost brought to tears over the condition Microsoft has left the computer industry in.

We are a multi Trillion dollar industry, and to be controlled by illegal means, by one company that has already shown disdain for the law and ethical business practices, means unless someone like you makes a move to change it, you will be remembered as part of the problem rather than as part of the solution.

Mike Stephen
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